



The President's Daily Brief

9 January 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Egypt

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Israeli aircraft yesterday retaliated for recent Syrian and guerrilla harassment with a series of attacks against army positions and guerrilla bases in Syria. (Page 2)

India's three military service chiefs are looking for ways to lessen their country's dependence on the USSR for military supplies and assistance. (Page 3)

In the Philippines, President Marcos appears prepared to take further repressive measures following some signs of opposition to his new constitution. (Page 4)

A major break in the Peronists' ranks has occurred with the resignation of the head of the controlling bloc within the Argentine labor confederation. (Page 5)

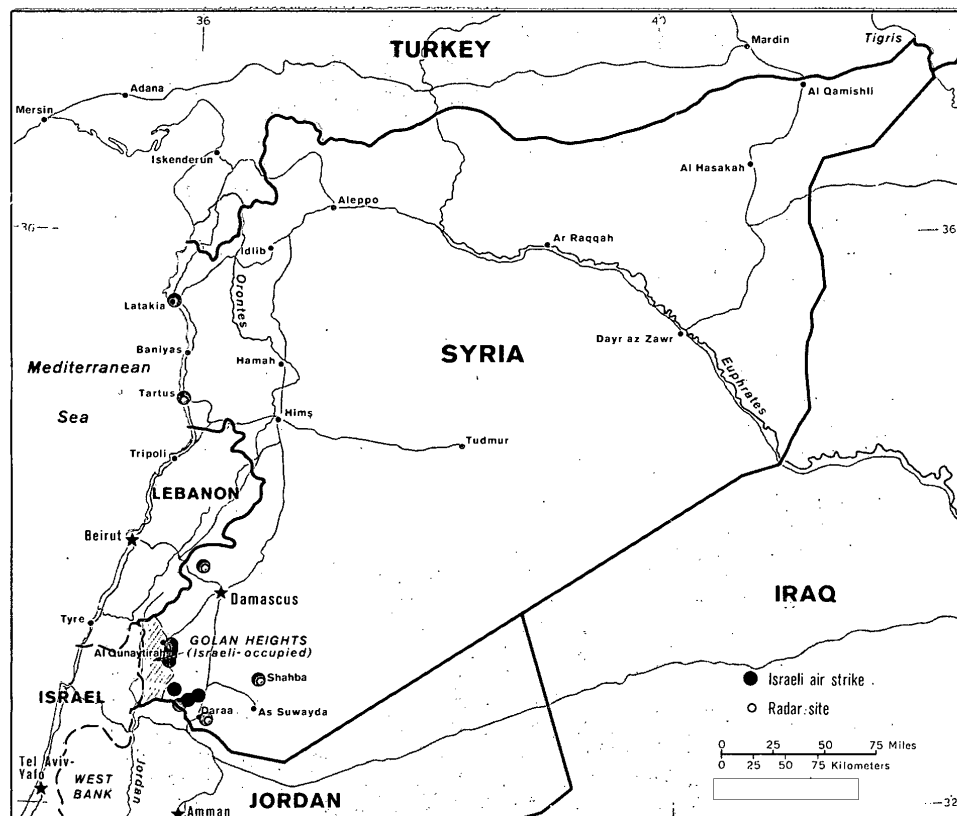
In southern Laos, the Communists are mounting strong attacks against Saravane. (Page 6)

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Israeli Air Attacks



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ISRAEL-SYRIA

Israeli aircraft carried out a series of attacks yesterday in a wide-ranging retaliatory action against Syrian Army positions and fedayeen bases in Syria. In one of these actions the Israelis claim to have downed five MIG-21s. Israeli artillery and tank fire, answering an extended Syrian artillery barrage into the Golan Heights, destroyed at least six tanks, according to an Israeli spokesman.

Since the Munich slayings, Tel Aviv has responded fast and hard to any provocations. The Israelis hold that, whether or not the incidents cause Israeli casualties, to do nothing would only encourage the fedayeen and their Syrian hosts.

The border had been relatively quiet from the time of the last heavy air strike into Syria on 21 November until mid-December, when a string of minor incidents began. Three instances of fedayeen and Syrian harassment from 5 to 7 January triggered the latest Israeli action.

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INDIA-USSR

India's three military service chiefs favor lessening their country's reliance on the USSR for military assistance. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] New Delhi recently vetoed a Soviet proposal that would have sent a large number of Soviet military training specialists to India.

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Since December 1971 India has contracted for some \$300 million worth of arms from the USSR, and for smaller amounts from Czechoslovakia and the UK. In recent months, however, political leaders in New Delhi have appeared increasingly sensitive to the implications of India's political, economic, and military relationship with Moscow and have sought ways to underscore India's independence.

In looking for Western arms, the Indians are concentrating on those items they have been unable to obtain from the USSR. High on their shopping list are new tactical strike aircraft to succeed India's SU-7s and MIG-21s, as well as an advanced bomber and a large guided missile cruiser or destroyer.

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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos appears prepared to take further repressive steps in response to the brief re-appearance of public dissent and reports of dissatisfaction with his proposed constitution. He has already reimposed strictures against free speech, which had been eased three weeks ago, and has postponed indefinitely the constitutional referendum.

Marcos also seems to be moving toward adjournment of representative bodies at all levels. The management of local affairs would then be conducted by "citizens' assemblies" which have been established in every village. Although these assemblies purportedly would function as open meetings, the presence of martial law authorities would ensure their reaching acceptable decisions.

Marcos has warned that "revolutionary government" may be necessary if opposition senators question his martial law decrees after Congress convenes on 22 January. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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For the time being, however, Marcos apparently wants simply to intimidate the legislators into adjourning Congress as soon as it convenes.

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ARGENTINA

The head of the controlling Peronist bloc within the General Confederation of Labor, Rogelio Coria, has resigned his position following unsuccessful appeals to Juan Peron to reconsider the makeup of the Peronists' slates for the elections in March. Peron and his designated presidential candidate, Hector Campora, had refused to give labor more congressional and provincial candidate slots.

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Coria's resignation could be the most significant break in the Peronists' ranks to date. Lanusse will do all he can to harness the dissident labor leaders onto Martinez' long-shot candidacy. Martinez' goal is to win at least 15 percent of the vote, which would qualify him to participate in the formation of two slates for the expected runoff election in April. Most workers have been primarily loyal to Peron as a person, however, and may not readily follow their leaders' bidding to switch camps.

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NOTE

Laos: The Communists are making a determined effort to drive government defenders from Saravane. Elements of the North Vietnamese 968th Division yesterday shelled or assaulted all 11 government battalions defending the southern provincial capital. South of Saravane several irregular battalions were heavily engaged and withdrew to the southwest. Communist infantry units also probed defenses to the north and west.

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